

THE OMEN

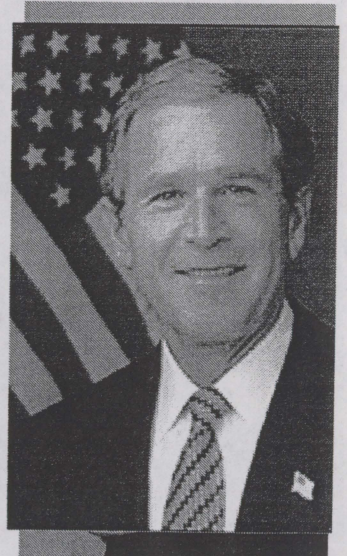
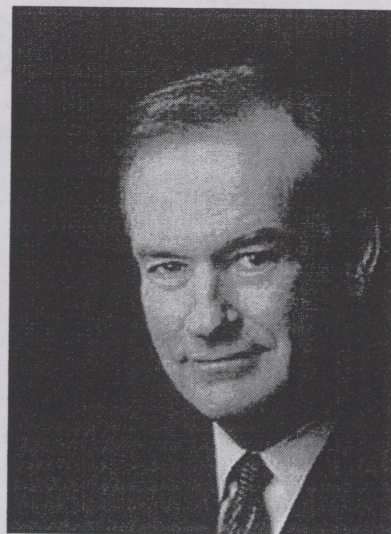


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for the third issue in the 28th Volume of the Omen on March the 2nd in 2007, the year of our Lord.

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TO SUBMIT:

Submissions are due on alternating Saturdays before 5 P.M. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, FedEx, Pony Express, semaphore, or email. Get your submissions to Jacob Lefton, Merrill B307, Box 0953, jwl04@hampshire.edu

"And that's the saga of Anna Nicole Smith. And someday, it's going to make a wonderful Children's Picture Book."
- Josiah Litant, on Anna Nicole Smith

Front Cover:

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THE OMEN

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omen.hampshire.edu

Volume 28 • Issue 1 February 2nd, 2007

EDITORIAL Freedom!!

[by Jacob Lefton]



My assault on a bastion of Freedom

Wow! I did cause a stir with that article about smoking last time. That's exciting. For those of you who missed it, here's an exciting recap, in the form of a photo I had a friend snap on a little disposable camera. The film came in last night. Just so you know what the hubbub is all about.

I admit I did polarize the debate quite heavily, but we make mistakes like that every now and then. Personally, I'm not sorry for my opinions, because, well, they're opinions that I've formed from my core values.

There's still room for discussion here though. How can we make this campus a more healthy environment? I would love to hear your comments on that, especially

As you can see... Well, it's pretty self-explanatory. I launched an attack on a bastion of Freedom, and got rightfully hammered for it. You can read more of that. We've got eight to ten pages of great stuff.

It's great though. I don't think we've had a controversy this big since... since before I was a student here. I'm glad people are talking about this stuff. It's an important issue. I

in light of the CORE Drug and Alcohol report that The Omen printed last year. I think you can find the survey and results somewhere on the intranet, but if you think we should re-print it for reference's sake (because it's too hard to find or something), please let me know.

The other discussion that we really need to be involved in is the Making of the College 2.0 discussion. I know many people feel that Ralph is fucking things up with this, and that it's really not going to amount to much. It certainly won't with that attitude.

We as students have so much power in defining our community. There's 1400 of us. Let's take control of the Making of the College and make it ours. Because, frankly, this college is ours. We pay so much for it and put so much energy into it, and the administration has consolidated power over the years, so that it's not really ours any more. But this is where we can make a stand.

We need to come together in small groups on our own and say what it is that makes our individual "Hampshire College." Screw the "MK2.0 Committee" and whatever they're doing. This is OUR college. Let's really stick to that.



POLICY

The Omen is Hampshire's longest-running bi-monthly publication, established by Stephanie Cole and Scott Tundermann in December of 1992. In the past, submissions have included students' perspectives on the campus, administration, news, movie reviews, commentary, short fiction, satire, first born, artwork, comics, and the occasional embarrassing self-promotion.

Everything the Omen receives, provided it is sent from a member of the Hampshire community, will be published unless it is deemed libelous or defamatory. Although we find such things amusing and entertaining for countless hours, it is just not an option in this forum. Libel will be considered clearly false or unsupportable writing that maliciously damages a person's reputation.

The Omen will not edit anything you write (except spelling and grammar). You must sign your real name (no anonymous submissions) and understand that you are responsible for what you say. Nonetheless, views in the Omen do not necessarily represent the views of anyone, anywhere, living or dead.

There is no Omen staff, save those positions of editor-in-chief and layout editor. To qualify for community service you must be a consistent contributor and help regularly with layout. Layout times (and such) will be discussed at our meetings. Meetings are held every Tuesday after release of an issue in the Leadership Center at 6PM. Everyone, everywhere, living or dead, should come.

The Omen loves you.



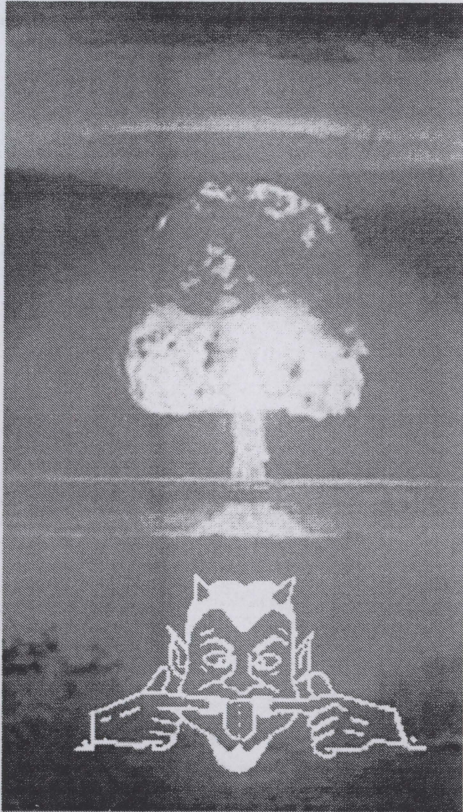
THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIR:

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

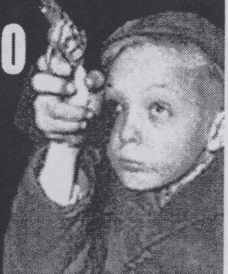
Reflect the staff's views (5)





SECTION HATE

We hate so
you don't
have to.



SMOKERS STRIKE BACK



To the Esteemed and Incensed Editor of The Omen,
Jacob Lefton

It is with displeasure that I must express how appalled I am at your distinct lack of editorial restraint. I have just read two pieces authored by you in the most recent (Feb. 2) issue of The Omen: a review of the Hampshire production of Titus Andronicus, and an acerbic, hyperbolic bit of diatribe that I regret I cannot dignify with any more distinguished an appellation than "screed."

Let's be honest, Jacob; everyone knows smoking is a bad idea. Everyone also knows that purchasing cigarettes puts money in the hands of capitalists who don't really deserve it and who couldn't care less about the general well-being of their fellow man. It's a terrible

idea to smoke on nearly every level, and if people in general were endowed with greater self-discipline and rationality then it wouldn't be a problem. And that's how we get it to stop being a problem: appeal to people's better natures so that they will want to improve themselves. To disregard all self-restraint and scream at them, hurling epithets and attacking their characters, is not only counter-intuitive, but hypocritical. In all things, if you wish to win people to your cause you have to first set a worthy example, and in this case that consists most fundamentally of displaying self-discipline and restraint. Your writing, as evidenced by these two pieces, is completely devoid of these qualities.

Does that mean that you are wrong? No! This itself was one of your fallacies; you concluded that

"When I see someone who smokes, I take it as a sign of fundamental stupidity [...]. I can't take what [they] have to say 100% seriously."

Besides displaying a lack of charity, this attitude is irrational. It is a textbook example of the *ad hominem* fallacy, which takes the following form:

- 1: a claims that q
- 2: a has the property of p
- Therefore: not q

You seem to be making two arguments of this form:

- 1: Bob claims that we should embrace "Community Responsibility (TM)"
- 2: Bob is a smoker
- Therefore: we should not embrace "Community Responsibility (TM)"

The second argument is identical, except that you replace smoker with hypocrite. These arguments are obviously invalid – that is, the premises could be true while the conclusion is still false. Before we move on though, it should be noted that even if you meant a weaker claim, such as "probably not q" or "I have reason to think that not q" these are equally problematic for the same reasons.

[by Daniel F. Griffin, Non-Smoker]

Dear Omen,

Hey Jacob, what's with all the hate? As I have recently quit smoking I am immune to your hate speech and I even consider myself better off for having smoked and then stopped. It seems that if you were interested in getting people to stop smoking or make them more aware of what happens to their body when they smoke you would include, I don't know, data or like facts. Maybe someone you loved died from smoking like my grandmother but I would hardly consider them a waste of genetic material. In fact that's a tad bit offensive

In order to make the arguments valid you need another premise, so that the argument would be of the following form:

- 1: a claims that q
- 2: For any person x, if x has property p, then for all claims y, if y is claimed by x then y is false
- 3: a has the property of p
- Therefore: q is false

Your argument in this form would read like this:

- 1: Bob claims that we should embrace "Community Responsibility (TM)"
- 2: Whatever is claimed by a smoker is false
- 3: Bob is a smoker.
- Therefore: We should not embrace "Community Responsibility (TM)"

This argument is valid, meaning that if (1), (2), and (3) were true, the conclusion would have to be true. However, premise (2) seems absurd, and I don't see how you could possibly argue for it effectively. It could be made more plausible if it were weakened to "whatever is claimed by a smoker is not likely to be true" and even more plausible if it were weakened to "If a smoker claims something, then there

but it is easy to be offensive when you have no actual experience with a subject you are giving an ill thought out tirade on. Find me one smoker who didn't know cigarettes were bad for them and have them read your article. I am sure in my heart that they will see the light and quit that very instant. We all have this wonderful forum to express whatever we feel that others can read and as the editor (contradicts Omen policy) of such a publication, it would seem in your best interest not to promote such an indifference to the contempt in your

is less likelihood that that thing is true than there would have been if the smoker had not claimed it"; however even this seems very implausible; it is a well known fact that many (probably all) very intelligent people do certain stupid things. It seems an untenable assertion that smoking in particular is so stupid that the mere fact that someone engages in it is sufficient grounds to doubt their intelligence and factual knowledge.

The next time you're feeling angry about something Jacob, do yourself a favor and punch a wall. Then, when you're calm and collected, tell us why by writing something measured and thoughtful.

Sincerely yours,
Daniel F. Griffin, Non-Smoker

Lefton, Jakob. "Smoking Sucks. Do Us a Favor and Drop Dead." The Omen Volume 28, Issue 1. p. 1, February 2, 2007

In formal predicate logic this would take the following form:

- 1: $C_x(q)$
- 2: $\Box x [\Box x \cdot P(x) \Box \Box y [C_x(y) \Box \sim y]]$
- 3: $\Box x \cdot P(x)$
- Therefore: $\sim q$



writing

Smoking is an easy personal vice to attack when you have never understood addiction and it certainly makes it easier that legislation is passed nearly everyday against smokers and their habit. You're winning! Be happy. I don't want a retort or a counter argument because what's the of having a debate on paper, no one had the chance to put in a dissenting viewpoint at the time, not to mention that you live two doors down from me. What's disgusting about this world has a lot more to do with humans dying of

[by Wills and Max on B3]

hunger and mutilating each other for political agendas and poverty and on and on and on. How about not bashing the innocent victims of addiction? Isn't that like showing off your legs to a handicapped person and asking why they can't walk? To try and earn your prize of describing how disgusting the fact that 50% of Hampshire students smoke is, lets imagine a small child running home in Lebanon. He has just found a Lebanese pound on the ground and is running home to give it to his impoverished family when suddenly there is a flash of light and a loud bang. I'm sure the child will not feel anything as the blood slowly drains from his severed limbs and he cries for his mother, but I don't know, I am not that child. Maybe I can seal the deal on

this contest by bringing up innumerable cases of women being raped in front of their families before being forced to shoot them and being shot themselves. Did any one need to read all that? Did you need to insult people you don't know?

Maybe this is all invalidated because of my "rotting brain" but it seems every "anarcho-fascio-vegan" I know gives a fuck about fellow PEOPLE and I don't judge them because they smoke tobacco 20 feet away from the building I live in. If you give a shit about humans, show them you care about them enough to want them to quit, for THEMSELVES. Do not let them be "shunned until" they decide to "grow brains." We should all ask our selves what is best for the community and maybe that's accepting

everyone for who they are.

Why am I sticking up for smokers when the things that have been stated in your article (besides for the hateful stereotypes) are true? Because I love them enough to want them to change. I want our community to be so tight we recognize there might be better things to do with our time. Still even I wish not to see a problem, that doesn't mean its solved. I also would like to collect on my prize.

Live in Love, Jacob

Wills "Not-feeling-the-omen-love"
Kinsley/Maxalicious Flavor-icious



A NEW HOPE

[by Stephen Morton] So, everyone's pissed off over the smoking article. Personally, I thought it was wonderful. The article was offensive, yes, but deliberately and overly so. This doesn't negate the fact that the real content of the article was meant seriously. These are two separate issues.

Offensiveness aside, the fact remains that the actual content of that article was, for the most part, quite solid. Smoking is, in fact, quite bad for you. It's bad for people around you. No one can deny these things, except for cigarette companies, which still try to deny it whenever they can. Smoking is good for you! Bunnies and Kittens! Buy our shit!

The problem is, that smoking inherently forces itself onto those around you. This separates it from other drugs, even more dangerous ones, in that it isn't simply an issue which affects you. Other people are going to be exposed to your smoke, in nearly all scenarios.

I don't take particular offense to this, but some people have genuinely strong negative reactions to this. It goes beyond a personal rights issue, unless you are smoking in a way which doesn't expose others to it. If you are, great.

Another non-issue is the fact that the great majority of cigarette money goes to Republican lobby groups, which is counter to the ideology of most smokers at Hampshire. This isn't, again, a universal truth. If you are a smoker you are aware of where the money you are spending is going, and you spend appropriately, then great! However, lots of things have similar cash flow issues associated with them, and paying attention to all of them leads to madness. So I won't condemn you there, either.

Where I disagree with Jacob is on the issue of responsibility implied in or the morality of smoking itself. This argument is basically the same for any drug use, but I don't find it particularly

persuasive. I believe that it is possible to responsibly use drugs, but I don't believe that most drug users do so. Furthermore, the drug aspects of cigarettes are more readily replicated in other, safer delivery mechanisms. If the drug aspects of this interest you, why not just get nicotine gum? Much safer, more widely acceptable, less affect on others around you. The remaining aspects of cigarette use are largely social, which seems like a poor reason to expose yourself to the associated risks. But, I can't make that call for you, nor do I presume to, for cigarettes or any other drug.

Your body is your own. The corollary to this is that my body is my own, and I am justified in being upset about things you do which affect me. This is the primary issue here, not any of the misdirects which have been thrown up recently about race or class or whatever. It also means that you need to actually be aware of what you are doing

to yourself, and the reasons why you are doing it. Fighting against smoking at a societal level isn't necessarily a fight against individual smokers at all, but rather a recognition of the fact that when something is as entrenched

in society as tobacco use is in ours, it becomes difficult to make rational decisions about it. Most people do not weigh their options carefully in making a choice regarding something with a fair amount of social sanction behind it,

"He has a point..."

While I think Jacob's method of expressing his distaste for smoking was immature, I think he has every right to publish it. The Omen is not the Climax, and is there for students to rant. The Omen will publish anything as long as it will fit in the magazine. (For example your novel can be published, but must do so in installments for practical reasons.) The Omen is anti-everything, a foil to the political correctness of the campus. It even has had dueling articles. I don't know why on earth one would read the Omen for what's going on, as it usually doesn't have any articles on anything newlike excepting Enrique's next death. The Omen is not a bonding mag- unless you make

it so. If you are upset with the content of the Omen -SUBMIT! While it could be argued that the Omen is mostly full of articles by just a few people, that's because no one else will submit things. The Omen meetings I've gone to go, "So, this issue is going to be kind of thin...do you have anything?" "Not really, I guess I'll write something about zombie Jesus and killing fuzzy animals." "Oh, okay."

The other thing that is so important about Jacob's article is that it is inflammatory. It makes people upset. It makes people think, and more importantly- it makes people ACT. Hampshire doesn't do enough of that. By making you feel less than human he made you do something about it. You postered all over campus, and are demanding an apology. Now if only Hampshire students put this much energy into other issues!

Also, I find the response racist and classist. Apparently anyone who is not a smoker is privileged. Would you Hampshire kids shut up about fucking privilege?! Why the hell do you think we upper middle class kids went to Hampshire- to learn how to change the world, and to use our privilege to help those who aren't as privileged! If we wanted to use our privilege, some of us could have gotten into Harvard! Also doesn't smoking cost money? And the statistics about Native American and mixed races are more likely to smoke- you're essentially saying, because these people are of a certain race they are weaker and more likely to succumb to the pressures of smoking, that they can't control themselves. That's racist. If you talked about poverty statistics, it's more understandable, but race?! That's not fair to those people.

As for the LGBTQ individuals, are you saying that they are genetically predisposed to smoke? Because that's what it sounds like.

Society puts a lot of pressures on people. Many people are stressed out. But there are other ways of coping that don't hurt other people. The Bill of Rights supports your ability to choose, until it starts hurting other people. Americans, even ones who don't smoke, end up paying medical costs for older Americans with smoking-related respiratory problems. Secondhand smoke is more damaging than firsthand smoke. Inbetween classes, you cannot get into an academic building without walking through a cloud of cigarette smoke. For those of us who like our lungs the way there are thank you very much,

and this is a dangerous thing when the decision is about something which is, well, dangerous.



we don't get to have a choice to clean air outside. What about kids with allergies and asthma? You could be setting off asthma attacks because of your personal choice. So honestly smoking shouldn't be allowed, because it hurts other

people. And I can see why Jacob would write that letter, after three years of walking though other people's smoke clouds. It gets old.

Non-smokers more intelligent? Well, yeah. If you read all the statistics and say, gee I think I want to smoke, you have got to be stupid. How can you look at the preserved lungs, and say, hmm I want the grey ones pitted with black holes. It's not an intelligent decision! When I came to Hampshire I was downright shocked at how many smart kids were being so dumb!

You know smoking is bad, but instead of putting the energy you spent making posters and putting them up, and justifying your negative choice, you could put it towards stopping smoking. People quit all the time. It's hard, but it's do-able. Stop blaming your role-models for your decision to smoke. Maybe it was easier for some of us not to smoke, but there are plenty of people in situations similar to yours who chose not to. You call it a decision, so it's time to take responsibility for your choices.

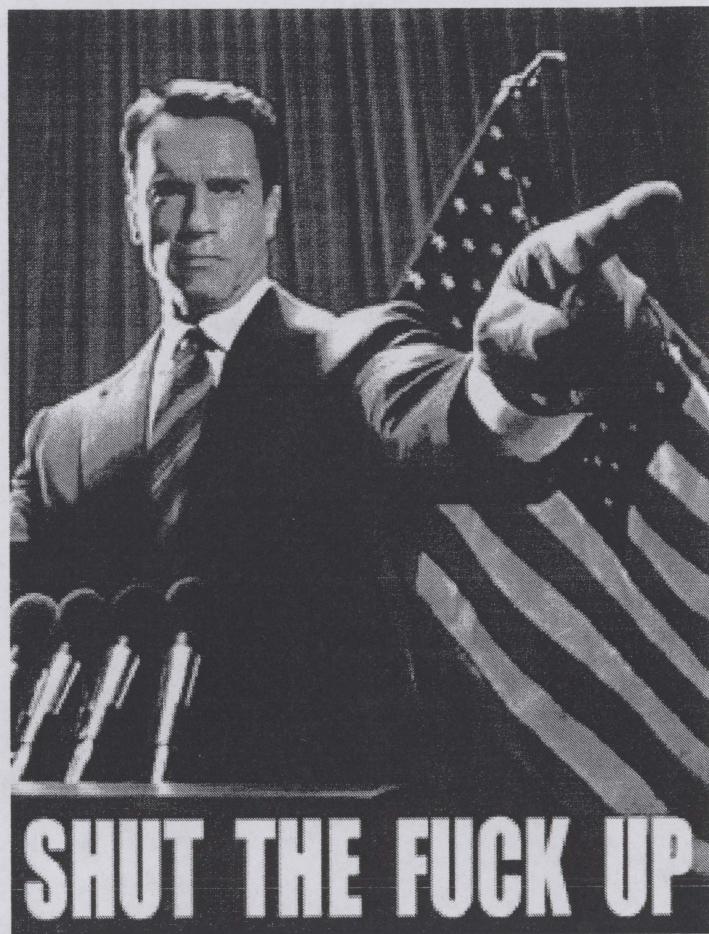


Memo to Sniveling Crybabies: Get Fucked!

[by Michael Petersen] Hampshire, how I loathe thee! I wasn't planning on writing for the Omen this semester, on account of the fact that I'm a lazy writer and I already have a Div III to deal with, but I had the ill fortune to come across Hampshire's latest tempest in a teapot.

One of my favorite places in Hampshire is the elevator in the Library, because there is a display on the elevator wall that sums up the dickwads that go here perfectly. In the glass panel, there's a slogan ripped-off from the Situationists that may or may not have been profound 40 some odd years ago about 'dying of boredom' and 'having a world of pleasure to win' (I'm paraphrasing; I'm sure as shit not dedicated enough to this rant to go check this garbage). Then, someone amended the phrase to add 'and pogs' to it. Okay, suitably vapid by Hampshire standards. But it gets better. Apparently, this slogan stuck in somebody's craw to such an extent that they felt the need to berate the person via Post-It note about how others have more pressing problems than 'boredom and pogs' (the joke about pogs flying over said persons head) and told the anonymous Situationist rip-off that he or she shouldn't 'let privilege blind you' (I'm not sure what 'privilege' is, but I'll assume it's a variant of 'privilege' just as 'facist' seems to be some variant of 'fascist,' or so I pick up from Hampshire's bathroom stall scrawlings). Thus, the classic Hampshire dichotomy exhibits itself: trendy vapidly posed against self-righteous mastery of the obvious, precariously balanced against one another. Therefore, I suppose I should congratulate the authors of the anti-Omen poster for achieving a sort of synthesis, as their poster is both vapid and self-righteous! Take a bow, my friends, you've fully earned the honor.

But let us turn to the actual content of the poster itself. It begins by variously lifting some inflammatory quotes from Mr. Lefton's article about how smokers should 'drop dead' and are a 'waste of genetic material.' According to the authors of the poster, these statements are insensitive, an attack on the Hampshire community, and (horror of horrors) disrespectful! Apparently the poster authors are unaware of this little thing that us writers generally refer to as 'hyperbole' or making intentionally over the top statements in order to get some type of point across (the point in this case being that smokers suck, or so I assume from a reading of the editorial). If these wooden literalists were to have read my Spring Shitlist article from two years ago, they likely would have distributed a poster callously accusing me of advocating lighting Terri Schiavo's dead corpse on fire and wheeling her hospital bed into the crowd of the 'Save Terri' protestors. It should be evident that I was being intentionally tasteless and did not literally advocate such an action (it would have been highly



disrespectful to poor Terri's body; a simple machine gunning would have gotten the job done sufficiently – oh whoops, there's that whole 'hyperbole' thing again!) Seriously, though, this is the fucking OMEN! It is not a bastion of objective journalism, it's not a form of group therapy, it does not represent the mythical 'Hampshire Community' but only the opinions of the individuals within that community. It is often intentionally tasteless and over the top. If you take anything within these said pages at all seriously, you are dumber than a bag of hammers.

There's still more, though, unfortunately. Apparently, and I didn't realize this, but making fun of smokers makes a racist and a homophobe who is blinded by your 'white male privilege'! This is because people of color, gays, and lesbians are more likely to start smoking. Armed with this fact, one only needs to apply the appropriate Hampshire 'logic' and presto, anyone who criticizes smokers is a privileged racist homophobe! Please ignore the fact that there are plenty of minority and GLBT students on campus who don't smoke and that the vast majority of smokers on campus are the typical trendy white privileged (there's that word again!) middle-class

shitheads who deserve to be roundly mocked at every possible moment. And who are the underprivileged ones anyway? The poor Hampshire College smokers who have been so 'put upon' by Jacob's editorial or the tobacco workers in Malawi, often children and women, who slave away in unhealthy conditions, enduring sexual harassment by their bosses, only to earn less in a month than most Hampshire students spend on cigarettes in a week? (Google tobacco workers Malawi.) Obviously, the poster authors, by defending smokers, are being objectively racist, sexist, and colonialist. They should examine how their privileged upbringings have blinded them to reality before opening their mouths to denounce others, because as we know anyone with a hint of privilege in their upbringing has no right to an opinion.

So why does this whole hubbub bother me so much? Hell, it was basically free advertising and publicity for the Omen. Well, mainly because it's a symptom of a larger cause that can be found on Hampshire in spades. I'm actually not unsympathetic to the idea that underprivileged people who

take up smoking should be given a more nuanced view (I will once again, however, emphasize that these people are a minority on this campus – most of the smokers here are rich white douchebags trying to be 'hip' and 'rebellious' and I have no sympathy for them whatsoever) as my father's smoking habit (he has since quit) was in large part shaped by the stress he endured as a result of his economic circumstances. However, distributing a shrill poster over a joke of an article is not going to win me as your friend. I wonder why the authors don't join a campaign to protest Phillip Morris or R.J. Reynolds for targeting underprivileged communities to sell their poison? Oh yeah, that would be too much work and effort. Easier to dust off a poster, make the copies, and distribute it around campus. That way we can 'do something' and *still* have time to play beer pong in the A4 lounge this weekend. It's the best of both worlds! Hallelujah! In other words, it's the typical 'soundbite leftism' of Hampshire, in which we can talk a good game about 'saving the world' but really just get trashed on the weekends like every other college student. Of course,

nothing happens, but it sure makes us feel good! (If you want extra credit, endorse ridiculously radical opinions that are completely beyond the pale of mainstream American politics. That way when nothing is accomplished you can blame some assorted conspiracy or other for your failure.) In the meantime, however, don't be surprised if people are entirely unimpressed by the fact that you manage to insert an empty 'save the world' slogan in between cigarette breaks, because you aren't saving the world, you are destroying it, as the consequence of your actual actions carry far more ramification than your self-righteous sloganeering. I, on the other hand, will be thanking the fuck Christ for a forum like the Omen, which even in its worst times, is still the only campus oasis in a desert of self-righteous suburban liberal shitheads who mistakenly are under the assumption that every word they write carries some authoritative aura of profundity. As for me, I suffer under no illusions, I'll fully admit that I am giving you nothing but my own personal bullshit, every time.



Open Letter

[by Mo Karn] It was as an interested observer that I read both Jacob's editorial in the Omen as well as the response taped to a streetlight between Greenwich and the library. I had heard many responses from others who had read both pieces before I actually sought them out myself. I still feel like my response is all me, and not what I've heard others say.

While I don't think I would have put it the way that Jacob did, except perhaps in a fit of rage or frustration, I do agree with the underlying things he was saying. Instead of letting this break

down into some dualistic name calling session, I say that as a community we reclaim these articles and use them to start some dialogues. We have the Omen, and it really should be used more to talk to each other about important stuff.

I used to be a smoker, on and off for a couple years. I became straightedge (no drugs, cigarettes, or drinking) a little less than a year ago. This was because at an animal rights conference I got into a discussion with some straight edge kids, and they won. Which certainly does not

happen much in arguments, but I guess I was particularly open and listening that day, because I really took what they said to heart and became straight edge officially the next day. The kids I was talking to pointed out how smoking etc. effected my ability to fight for the things I cared about. This argument hit me in a way that no previous argument about health issues or whatever had. This also seems to be an argument that applies to Hampshire in particular, and relates to something I interpreted Jacob as suggesting. Because many people at

Hampshire claim to be activists and politically involved it seems doubly astonishing that such people would participate in an activity such as smoking that is contradictory to many things they espouse to believe. Not only is smoking hurting many of the things Hampshire students often say they want to help, such as the environment or community, and not only does it support things many Hampshire students say they dislike, such as the government and large corporations, but in hurting our health smoking hurts Hampshire students' ability to fight for any of the causes they believe in. This does not have to be interpreted as a strictly political idea either- smoking inhibits one's ability to create art, to farm, or to do chemistry.

This means that in discussions such as this I operate in a strange middle ground- I can't be but so hardline because I too used to smoke, but I did eventually come to my senses and quit and so I relate a lot to the non-smoking side. I try not to be super judgmental because I don't want to be a hypocrite, but **BOTTOM LINE SMOKING IS REALLY FUCKING DUMB.**

Also, a side note here, one can be anti-smoking without being pro drug war or pro government. I think that the anti drug and smoking campaigns of the government are fucked up, and actually due to how out of touch they often are add to the drug culture of making dangerous things funny. I willingly disparage anti-drug commercials, but I remain anti-drug.

Too many people smoke. It is bad for you, it is bad for the people around you, it is bad for the environment, it involves supporting bad corporations and bad governments, it has no redeeming qualities. All of the "good" parts to smoking are bullshit excuses- excuses are different than reasons. Sure it can 'relieve stress' but imagine how much less stressful life is when you get

to work less because you don't need the money for cigarettes, when you aren't sick all the time from cigarettes weakening your immune system, when you aren't dependent on dangerous chemicals. We all consume an object (or non-object such as an animal or another person's body [broaden your definition of consume]) or participate in some activity that is destructive to ourselves or to others. I have never met someone without a vice. I personally eat too many soy products. But I am working on it and working on altering my eating habits. I understand that smoking falls into this category and it becomes one of the things people do while still knowing it is not good for them. Because smoking is so risky (i.e. For women on birth control) and so destructive and so flagrantly unnecessary I think it is a habit we can break.

I want to challenge our (I still do this sometimes, and I feel like a lot of people participate in the culture of glorifying substance abuse and unhealthy choices) attitude of being dumb being funny. Some things are serious. For instance, instead of being frightened or horrified by our behavior when intoxicated, say, throwing up a lot, or making out with someone we might not have made out with when sober, we turn these actually sad events into funny stories- ignoring the true implications of our actions. Stories go, I was sooooo drunk, or I was soooo high, and then continue to tell of some ridiculous often dangerous event. I think it is really unhealthy that we do this. Even though I still lapse into the old habit of telling funny stories about intoxication I think we should make more attempts at not laughing these situations off- when a friend tells you about how sick they got while drinking or how hung over they are or the how they woke up and didn't know where they were - these are warning signs of serious problems, and we should not laugh, we should ask if they are ok, if they need to talk, and tell them that such behavior is sad and dangerous.

You do not have to drink every day to be an alcoholic, and you definitely do not have to smoke or do drugs or drink every day for it to be a dangerous and abusive activity.

The argument about how Jacob is somehow ignoring his privilege in not being a smoker seems a bit twisted to me. I believe and understand that many oppressed people indulge in smoking, especially compared to the privileged white middle class. But it is completely backwards in my mind to use this as a defense for smoking amongst the minority (bad term b/c people of color for instance are actually a majority in the world) or oppressed classes. And I definitely do not think that somehow being anti-smoking is really a cover for finding one more way to oppress already oppressed people. People who are fighting daily for dignity, acceptance, justice etc. need to be strong and healthy in order to successfully fight for such things. What good are you to a cause if you get lung cancer and die young. Not much. If you are a member of a group likely to be persecuted by the police, you shouldn't smoke because you need that lung capacity to **RUN FROM THE FUCKERS!!!!** Smoking and other such behavior is indulging in oppression, it is self-abuse. I understand that psychologically being misunderstood and outcast etc. is largely a reason that people indulge in self abusive behavior, but to condone this is horrific. I used to smoke because I didn't like who I was, or was depressed enough or whatever to not care about my health. That did not mean that I should not have been criticized for my dangerous activity. In order to figure out who you actually are, I believe a bit of sobriety is required. And ceasing to hurt oneself, whether it be through cutting, smoking, drinking, watching tv etc. is a way to start becoming stronger. When the oppressed do things that hurt themselves they are really just helping out the oppressors. Particularly because there have been documented cases of

the government and other oppressive groups using substances as a way to keep certain classes of people oppressed and under control there should be powerful movements to liberate ourselves from the yokes of oppression - smoking for instance.

When we talk about community we need to keep in mind that this means taking care of each other. This means supporting people who do choose to quit drugs, drinking, or smoking instead of challenging that positive life choice. This means participating in group activities that do not revolve around substances. This means not assuming

it is ok to light up next to anyone. We can do amazing things for each other by being a titch more considerate. Ask if it is ok to smoke or drink a beer next to someone. You never know who is struggling to overcome an addiction, or who has some really negative history with a substance. When issues that are often seen as "personal" arise dialogue seems to break down. I do not see smoking as a personal decision. It is highly, highly political, and to remove it from that political sphere is to create a false dichotomy or dualism that fails to reflect the reality of the effects and implications of a decision to smoke. I

A Response to "Titus" Review

Dear Sir,

While reading your article "Review of the Horrible Tragedy of Titus Andronicus" I could not help but come across a contradiction in your writing. The contradiction is in your critique of the movement within the play. You say "It was sad to read a director's statement that said she was so devoted to physicality in acting and for there to be so little of this belief evident in the play." But only a paragraph later do you state, "The brother Chiron and Demetrius were the most physical characters - you could tell who they were and what their motives were by their body's movements."

Now, I will admit, I have a large bias, for I happily will admit that I am that self-same movement director. But simply as a reader I question how you can claim the directors had no results in their efforts, when here you state yourself that some of the actors did a good job moving? Did you never consider that this is not only a result of the actor's talent, but also of the direction? I can guarantee you that the philosophy of the direction was not

based around "stand in one place and say your line with your arms semi-stiff by your side..." etc. Quite the contrary, but directors only have so much control over the actors on stage as well as their energy levels, quality of voice and so on. I am writing this letter not so much for defense, but as a complaint that when things go wrong in the theater critics tend to blame the directors and those in charge, but when things go right suddenly the actors are the only talent involved with the show.

Now don't get me wrong, many of your criticisms are quite true, it was hard to understand what's going on, but then again, so is most Shakespeare for those who have never been deeply involved with a text for months on end.

I will not go further in defending the play and the people who put effort into its production, they can do that on their own. I merely wanted to point out this contradiction in your article. However, I also think the play deserves a better written review. A review more carefully produced, one where the writer took the time to understand that they may

not fully grasp Hampshire theater after having been absent from it for two and a half years. Having been gone for so long perhaps the writer should take into consideration that they may not necessarily know how things work in a little theater, and one with an even smaller income to boot.

"Titus Andronicus" was an incredibly difficult show to do, perhaps beyond the reach of Hampshire College theatre, but it doesn't hurt to shoot for the moon once in awhile, even if one apparently fails. And to use Mr. Lefton's own words - I'm glad I didn't have to pay for "The Omen", for I am, quite frankly, disappointed in its quality.

Also, another mistake found in your article is that the play was actually two and half hours, not three and half.

Do not take this letter as an attack, but simply as one's own critique on the quality of the article itself. Beyond this, I have nothing more to say.

Elizabeth Quilter



SECTION
SPEAKNostalgia and Charred Pig from a
Former Editor

In the spring of 2003, after four years of writing for the Omen (one semester of that as editor), the Omen staff threw a big party celebrating the magazine's tenth anniversary. We invited a bunch of former writers, including founder Stephanie Cole (who is now a lawyer in upstate New York), to share war stories on the library lawn. We got a whole bunch of food, including an entire roast pig, which ranks among the most disgusting things I've seen.

It was a good time, but it was a little sad for me: a good chunk of the Omen regulars, including myself, were graduating that year, most of the rest would graduate the next year, and few incoming students had joined our ranks. It didn't seem like the Omen would survive for much longer, so I decided to assume the worst and not look back. Now it's almost four years later, and I've been told the Omen is still around. In your face, Zole '03! Your prediction was as accurate as your Div III was impressive!

I found out when your editor, Mr. Lefton, contacted me about the end of my comic, Death To The Extremist. I started DTE because then-editor Jacob Chabot had a very popular comic in the Omen, and also because it was the Omen and they'd print whatever I gave them. Jacob went on to work at Marvel Comics and recently published his own book, entitled The Mighty Skullboy Army Vol. 1, which you should check out. For my part, I kept writing DTE for the next six or so years at www.dtecomic.com, and a couple years ago Ted Rall included me in anthology, Attitude 3: The New Subversive Online Cartoonists.

So when Mr. Lefton wanted to know

if the Omen served as my springboard to fame, I had to respond: kind of? Not that many people read DTE on the Web; I probably got more readership from discarded Omen pages soaking in puddles outside the Dining Commons. (Do you guys still call it Saga? That always annoyed me.) I certainly didn't hit it big, like the aforementioned Mr. Chabot, or Eugene Mirman, or Elliot Smith, although I did avoid putting out a series of depressing albums and then stabbing myself to death. But as regrettable as most of my Hampshire career was, I can still look back fondly on writing for the Omen. After the first issue of my first semester came out, I decided to write for every issue until graduation, and that was probably the best decision I made in those four years. The decision to graduate in four years is probably a close second.

It sounds like not a whole lot has changed about Hampshire or the Omen. The Omen is still an underused medium, and that's really too bad, but I think it shows a weakness many Hampshire students have in common: we all think we're really goddamn special. I know I did! As a result you get a lot of people starting their own student groups rather than joining someone else's. Hell, during my tenure we had the Hampshire Anime Group and Hampshire Asian Media, who almost came to blows until they reached a compromise, brokered by Kofi Annan, in which one group would show the dubbed version of Princess Mononoke and the other would show it with subtitles. It makes the Omen's resilience all the more impressive, especially when you look at the half-dozen "newspapers" that have sprung

[by Michael Zole (F99), zole@zole.org]

up and withered in that time.

The thing is, Hampshire basically takes the one smart, interesting, weird kid from every high school in America (and some abroad) and puts them in the same place. Put another way: all of us Hampshire students were the smartest kid in our first grade class, and we've basically been coasting on that since then.

The resulting student body is fascinating and kind of a disaster at the same time. We start new student groups, rather than strengthening existing ones, because we're used to being independent. We write Div III proposals that don't involve any innovation or (more importantly) any real work. (I'm looking at you, photo student who thinks nobody else has ever thought of sneaking into that abandoned mental hospital in Northampton and taking

pictures of the decaying innards.) Hell, I wanted to study video game design without learning any programming or other skills. I'm glad my advisor, Ryan Moore, twisted my arm into learning C++. It helped me get a job, at least.

All that said, Hampshire is a good place to be if you want to be around some stunningly talented and creative people. Take advantage of that: these people still exist in the real world, but they're spread out and hard to find. I live in Boston, where nerds are everywhere (except, apparently, the police bomb squad), and still I feel weird.

Anyway, I say all this because the Omen is a great institution, and it seems like people still don't quite realize this. It's an open submission publication, and yet when someone writes an article people don't like, those people condemn the whole magazine. Why? You and

eight of your friends could submit a page each, and you'd be the magazine! The argument I always heard was that people couldn't respond in the Omen, because the magazine itself was not a "safe space" or whatever. Just so you know: that kind of logic does not fly in the real world.

Sorry to get preachy, Hampshire, but I'm just so darned encouraged to see that the Omen is still around. It's existed in many forms over the years, at times being Hampshire's "hate mag", at other times trying desperately not to be Hampshire's "hate mag" but failing, and at one point it looked like a 'zine, but on a campus with few traditions, it is one of them. You should get involved, especially if they still order pizza at the layout meetings.



How To End the War

I have a friend from Chicago who now attends UCSB. We hung out a lot our senior year, but drifted apart after awhile, or something. I don't know. We didn't hang out over the summer much, and then went away. We ended up both going to New Orleans to do relief work. I've always really admired her, and how she does everything 110%. Her reason for doing things comes from such a strong and powerful sense of self and of justice, community, and dedication as I've only seen in a few others. Not that she's this untouchably noble activist or something. She's just a smart, neat kid, I guess. Anyway, I'm always wishing her school were a little closer to ours. California Students are good at organizing. Currently some students are trying something we tried

last year, a strike. Now, how much sense does it make for liberal arts students to stop going to class? Here's what they said: How to Stop the War: Or, Why a Student Strike at UCSB Makes Perfect Sense!

People have been asking us (organizers of the student strike) why they should participate in this action. The following lays out multiple reasons why striking makes sense.

Students have very little influence over foreign policy. We are young, our votes don't matter to this president, we are too disorganized right now to lobby, in short, students are like poor people: politicians don't pay us much attention. They don't have to.

But we do have a great deal of power if we act in a collective way!

So how do students collectively act to help end the war? Protest is a good start, but if all we do is come out on a weekend and protest in the park, or if all we do is hold a lunchtime rally at school and have people speak against the war, and afterward everyone heads back to class and work and goes about their normal lives, then it's unlikely to have a big impact. This kind of antiwar action doesn't have an immediate effect on the situation. Lots of students understand and feel this way about protesting so they stop going to antiwar rallies in large numbers. The Bush administration is ignoring us and going against our wishes because they can. Congress is being sheepish (relative to how forthright they could be) and choosing not to end the war because

[by Serena Himmelfarb]

News, Commentary,
Announcements,
Propaganda,
Editorials.

we're not forcing them to act. Right now we're living under a very anti-democratic regime that doesn't want to listen to us, and doesn't have to as long as we stick to the means of protest we're most used to. Until we make them listen they will do as they wish, not as we say.

So how do we prevent Bush from escalating the war? How do we prevent him from possibly attacking Iran or North Korea? How do we force our leaders to listen to us when they have abandoned democratic checks and balances? We need to act on institutions and structures that we have the power to influence and change. This means acting here and now in a practical and material way! Therefore, we as students need to do several things:

1. Strike: no class. The university is shut down for a day as students refuse to go to school. More strikes could ensue if it's necessary.

2. No consumption: our nation goes to war in part because it is resource hungry. As long as the USA makes up only 4% of the world's population but consumes more than 25% of its resources (including oil) then our nation must make war on others. Unsustainable consumerism fuels war. Energy dependence on oil fuels war. Using our economic power threatens the assuredness with which our leaders rule contrary to our democratic wishes. It also helps us teach one another about living simply so that others might simply live.

Both of these things means stopping business as usual. Remember what president Bush told the American people after 9-11? Go shopping! America is open for business. Go about your lives as though nothing happened. There is nothing a ruler fears more than a strike on these different levels. If the American people really want to stop the war and occupation of Iraq and prevent further belligerence then

it's as simple as withdrawing our tacit support. Right now we are mostly only symbolically opposing the war. Bush has shown time and again that he doesn't care about other's opinions and ideas. After February 15, 2003, the largest protest in human history opposing the Iraq war president Bush called us a "focus group." Thus, if we really want to affect his policies we need to withdraw our tacit support and stop business as usual. Shutting the university down is the most immediate and powerful thing students can do on this front.

Shutting down UCSB is a very direct way of opposing war and militarism, not just the war against Iraq. The University of California is not an enlightened institution, an "ivory tower" or benign force for good. It is tied up with the very corporations and political leaders who have promoted this war and profited off of it from day one. Some of the UC Regents (like Richard Blum) profit off the war through stocks they own in military contracting corporations (see Byrne, 2007). Other UC Regents are major financial supports of the Bush regime (like Gerald Parsky who raised \$200,000 to re-elect Bush in 2004). The UC has also formed a for-profit business partnership with the Bechtel Corp., one of the most notorious war profiteers in Iraq. This partnership is to co-manage one of the nation's nuclear weapons research, design, manufacturing facilities (Los Alamos Lab). UC makes nuclear weapons! UC campuses also take in hundreds of millions each year to do weapons research for the military and arms manufacturers. UC investment fund managers have also invested our school's finances in a portfolio that includes military-industrial corporations like Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. Military recruiters are given unfettered access to each of our campuses, and here at UCSB there is even a Department

of Military Science where our fellow students are taught how to make war.

You may think that some of these are legitimate university functions. That's reasonable. But the fact is this; the university makes very real contributions to our nation's war efforts. When the war is unjust, criminal, when the government is pushing us further toward the brink, we help this happen, we make it possible. We are complicit in all of this. That is, unless we do something about it.

The UC has a vested interest in war. Striking sends the message to the UC Regents and administrators that we will not tolerate our school's grossly disproportionate ties to corporations and federal agencies that do nothing other than profit off war and prepare nuclear weapons to serve these up to a president who has proven wholly incapable of respecting the rule of law. It also sends a message to the government that we will not be complicit in any illegal and immoral war. Therefore striking isn't an indirect or irrational thing to do at all. Striking at a time like this against the war and occupation of Iraq, against a possible war on Iran, and against the militarism that is infecting our university will send a clear message and be an empowering action toward peace.

Questions? Comments? Talk to us
- ucsbsaw@gmail.com

Byrne, Peter. "Senator Feinstein's Iraq Conflict." <http://www.metrosantacruz.com/feinstein>

Feb 8, 2007 at 10:20 pm

From: Darwin BondGraham (UCSB)
To: Peace Out University - Student
Strike Against War
Subject: Final Push - Working Meeting
Tomorrow
Hi all,

Tomorrow night will be our final meeting before the strike. Please come to the IV Tenants Union office - 6550 Pardall Rd, Unit B.

This is the big push! We need all the help we can get.

This will be a working meeting, so we'll have stuff people can do on hand. Outreach is the big thing. Next week there will be tabling on campus along with other creative ways of spreading the word and explaining why we're striking.

We'll also talk about the programming for Peace-Out-University.

Come. And bring 5 friends.

Message from Adrian Jay Drummond-Cole (UCSB) of Peace Out University - Student
Strike Against War
Feb 10, 2007 at 12:01 am
From: Adrian Jay Drummond-Cole (UCSB)
To: Peace Out University - Student
Strike Against War
Subject: Work party!

Molly Mcleod's
Top Fifteen things I'd do if I became an Evil Overlord:

1. Make a law that every person had to give at least 50 hugs a day
2. Replace all Mercator-projection maps with Peters-projection maps
3. Declare that puppies and kittens always had to stay the same size, and never grow into dogs and cats
4. Paint colorful murals on every blank wall at Hampshire College
5. Make Silly Hats Day and Silly Walks Day EVERY DAY
6. Ban comic sans
7. Force everyone to read The Martian Chronicles, by Ray Bradbury, You Shall Know Our Velocity! by Dave Eggers, Leaves of Grass, by Walt Whitman, and The Essential Calvin & Hobbes, by Bill Watterson
8. Mandate that every workplace has a 2 hour "arts and crafts" period every day, where there are plenty of paints, play-doh, shaving cream, stickers, face-paints, clay, crayons, and markers for everyone
9. Change every single book into a graphic novel
10. Make a law banning matching socks, punishable by having one's feet tattooed with strange designs
11. Strongly discourage hate letters and

Message:

Help make outreach materials!
Tomorrow, Saturday, February 9 at
12:00PM, BIKO co-op: 6612 Sueno.
See you here!

Feb 8, 2007 at 10:20 pm

From: Darwin BondGraham (UCSB)
To: Peace Out University - Student
Strike Against War
Subject: Final Push - Working Meeting
Tomorrow



[Submitted by Sarah Weiss] FROM THE SAGA WHITEBOARD

"Baby Animals are Cute:

Quails
mice
snakes
Voltron (R)
ducks
humans
chickens
otters
squids
kittens!!!
puppies
seahorses
lizards
salamanders
tent-making bats
monkeys
foxes
raccoons
pandas
deer
Bunnies
tofutti"

The Omen is cute so you
don't have to be.
~Sarah



encourage love letters

12. Send jars of strawberry applesauce, a set of watercolor paints, a nice vest, masking tape, granola, a box of triple ginseng tea, a kilt, a set of legos, and juggling balls to every person in the mail

13. Replace close-minded extremists, of any affiliation or political inclination, with soft and fuzzy stuffed animals (by that I mean round up every extremist, and put them all through a machine that would physically transform them into a stuffed animal. in case there was any confusion.)

14. Create a remote control that could fast forward, rewind, and pause time (I'd be the only person who could have one) and then use it to pull off elaborate and silly practical jokes

15. Demolish everything between the West Coast and New England, except for New Mexico, Minnesota, and St. Louis, just because I have a good feeling about them



My Top Five Websites right now, in no particular order:

- [by Molly McLeod]
1. **McSweeney's Internet Tendency.** Website of a supercool literary publisher, mostly humor that appeals to your intelligence and high level knowledge of pop culture. The best are Reviews of New Food, Lists, and Open Letters to People or Entities Who are Unlikely to Respond. www.mcsweeneys.net
 2. **Threadless.** Amazing t-shirts. Graphic designers and illustrators, from all over the world and of all experience levels, submit hundreds of designs every week, and YOU get to vote on which ones you like best, and then they put them on shirts! Clever, cute, funny, and overall very well designed. www.threadless.com
 3. **Postcrossing.** Sign up, and they'll send you an addresses all over the world to send a postcard to. Then you'll start getting postcards from all over the world. So far I've sent postcards to people in Italy, Finland, Brazil, Singapore, Germany, and Iceland. I've gotten postcards from England, Germany, and several from Finland. It's really fun to get mail from all over the world every day! www.postcrossing.com
 4. **Indexed.** Blog of really clever Venn Diagrams and other graphs of comparison drawn in index cards. indexed.blogspot.com
 5. **Wikipedia.** I mean, come on. Really. How could we live without it?



Dearest Hampshire College,

We're through. I don't think this is working anymore. I've changed, and you haven't. I need to move on.

Frankly, you bore me. When I started seeing you, I thought you were exciting, rebellious, and smart. Above all, smart. And then, you gave a diploma to someone whose Div III film was 10 minutes of Hampshire students

"... I thought you were exciting, rebellious, and smart. Above all, smart..."

dressed as pirates and ninjas battling in the Dakin basement. I don't think I'll ever forgive you for that.

I remember one fine fall morning in particular, the year I led one of your orientation groups. There I was, meeting those entrusted to me for an ill-advised attempt at making you seem like King Shit of College Mountain, when one of my group asked, "Hey, so I noticed there was an orientation group for indie music. I really like indie music and I was wondering if I could join their group instead of yours, because there's probably not going to be another chance to meet others like me." Despite the way it seemed at the time, I am truly sorry that I laughed in the poor girl's face. There are, [snicker] very few people who share her interests here, making her a [tee hee] minority who needed to find her safe space.

Maybe this is my fault. I should have listened to your needs. Instead of spending so much time on my own interests, I should have done my best to make sure that every student of yours, regardless of academic competence, received the support needed to coast through the system. I called you challenging and independent because I refused to see you for who you are on the inside: a complacent, loving, cuddly institution who just wants everybody to be happy! How could I have missed it?

I'm sorry I read the Bible. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. It was a shitty thing to do to you. I probably did it, on some unconscious level, because I knew you'd hate it. I don't know what's wrong with me. Wait, I'll make it up to you. I'll explain, to you and all your friends, Sufjan Stevens' songs. See? It's good for something. This doesn't have to end badly.

I've been fair. I've admitted my flaws. I've done all I can, but you, my dear, just aren't doing it for me. I don't see a way to fix this. You sold me on an image that just doesn't fit who you really are, and I tried to hold you to it. I think we might be able to be friends in the future, but for now, I need my space, OK? Let me finish my work in peace, don't call me, and we'll part ways in May.

Very Sincerely,
Abigail Ohlheiser



[by Abigail Ohlheiser]

ONE and TWO | Death To The Extremist go to JAIL | CCXXVII by M. Zole

I AM GLAD WE ARE FITTING IN HERE IN PRISON.

I WAS SO AWKWARD THAT FIRST DAY.

1

2

I THOUGHT YOU HAD TO ACT TOUGH TO BE ACCEPTED.

ME TOO!

1

2

TURNS OUT WE GOT SENT TO A UNIQUE PRISON.

1

2

INMATES HERE ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE NORM.

THEY THINK OUTSIDE THE CELL.

1

2

THEY AREN'T AS CONCERNED WITH APPEARANCE.

IT'S OKAY TO NOT WEAR ORANGE.

1

2

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE VIOLENT.

VIOLENCE IS SO MAIN-STREAM.

1

2

AND I'VE MET SO MANY INMATES WHO LIKE PABST BEER AND THE BAND SIGUR ROS.

1

2

MAYBE I AM NOT COOL ENOUGH FOR THIS PRISON.

1

2

these are not our inmates

www.zole.org/extremist

David's Wisdom Nook

A Bi-Weekly Advice Column

[by David Mansfield] David Mansfield is the author of four self-help books: *Babies Don't Like Everyone*, *Finding Connections In A Reclusive Society*, *Making Marriages Last*, and *The Great Big Book of Trains*. He currently lives in Amherst, Massachusetts with his wife and three kids. A professor at Hampshire College, he teaches classes solely about Roald Dahl's *Matilda*. He is very nice and you can all relate to him. If you have a question for David, you can email it to him at davidswisdomnook@gmail.com.

Dear readers,
The future of David's Wisdom Nook is a bit uncertain. It has been a while since the last one, and will probably be longer before the next one if indeed there is a next one. I am just as into the idea as ever, but I feel like I am just repeatedly re-treading the same ground, and need to find a way to make it more interesting for myself and my readers. With that in mind, I give you an anemic installment of the Wisdom Nook. I apologize for it being so short, and hope that I will be able to return at full strength some time in the near future.

-David

David,
My 12-year-old son has recently been spending a lot of time with one of his new friends from school, 'Mike'. Luckily, Mike is a nice boy, and I'm not worried about my son falling in with a bad crowd. However, in our home my wife and

I have very strict rules about the movies and television shows our son is allowed to watch, and Mike's parents do not. Several days ago my son made reference to a film that I know to have violent and sexual content, and my wife and I are horrified that he saw it. How can I prevent this from happening again? I can't control what he does away from home, and I don't want to hinder his social life, but I don't want him seeing inappropriate movies. Help!

Child's Objectionable Taste In Film A Corrupting Agent To Other Child

Dear COTIFACATOC,

Firstly, I'm glad to see that you care about your son's independence. It's far too easy to become a protective parent in these situations, and the fact that you're taking his personal life into account shows that you truly care about your son.

That being said, you must realize that since your son has already seen a movie with sex and violence in it, he has opened the door to the road of manhood, and must now go through that door and travel that road until he reaches the enchanted castle of maturity and responsibility. Every road has a door, and sex and violence are the keys that open this one. But enough with the metaphors. Here is what you must do:

Your son may look the same, but what he has seen has caused irreversible internal change. During the next waning gibbous, use a spiderhair brush made by an infertile blind woman to spread fresh ram's blood on your son's chest, then bind his extremities and

take him into the forest. If you don't live near a forest, your son will never be a man, and you should abandon him in the mall and move away before he finds his way home. Barring this unfortunate circumstance, you should leave him in the forest with nothing but two pieces of each utensil from your finest set of silver, a human clavicle sharpened to a point, and a Ziploc bag full of live ants and fake maple syrup. I know this will be difficult, but I'm sure that you remember going through the same thing. It's just a part of growing up.

If your son survives the test, he will emerge from the forest three days later as a fully-grown, bearded pillar of priapic glory. He may also emerge with wives, but this is not always the case. If he fails, he will either be devoured by warthogs or return home as a woman.

This is where babies come from.

David,

A few weeks ago one of my close friends from childhood, "Brenda" had a birthday, which I forgot about. Personally, I don't think this a huge deal - We live on opposite ends of the country, and only communicate through two or three letters every year. Sure, I wish I had remembered, but we are living separate lives now and I think we should be allowed to forget a birthday now and then. But yesterday I received a thank-you card from Brenda, thanking me for the card I didn't send. It could be a mistake, but I'm fairly sure that this was a jab at the fact that I forgot. Am

I wrong in thinking that this isn't a big deal?
Are Old Friends Allowed Momentary Forgetfulness

David,

Affair
Name

Dear AOFAME,

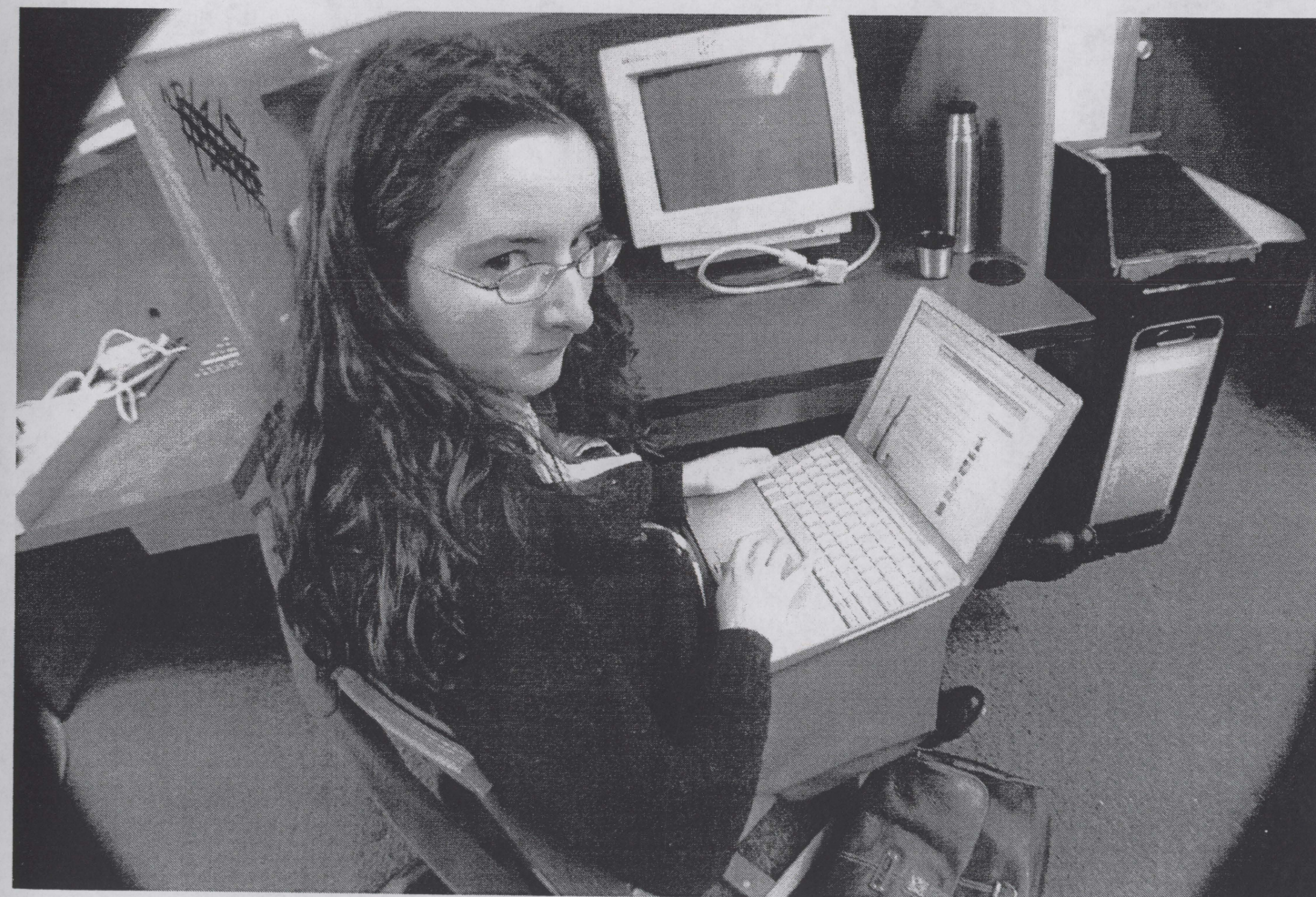
As friends grow apart, responsibilities can become hard to determine and feelings can be easy to hurt. I don't know all the details, but I'm pretty sure that you are a b

Dear NAME,
Answer 3

That's all for this time. For more, visit the archives at davidswisdomnook.blogspot.com.

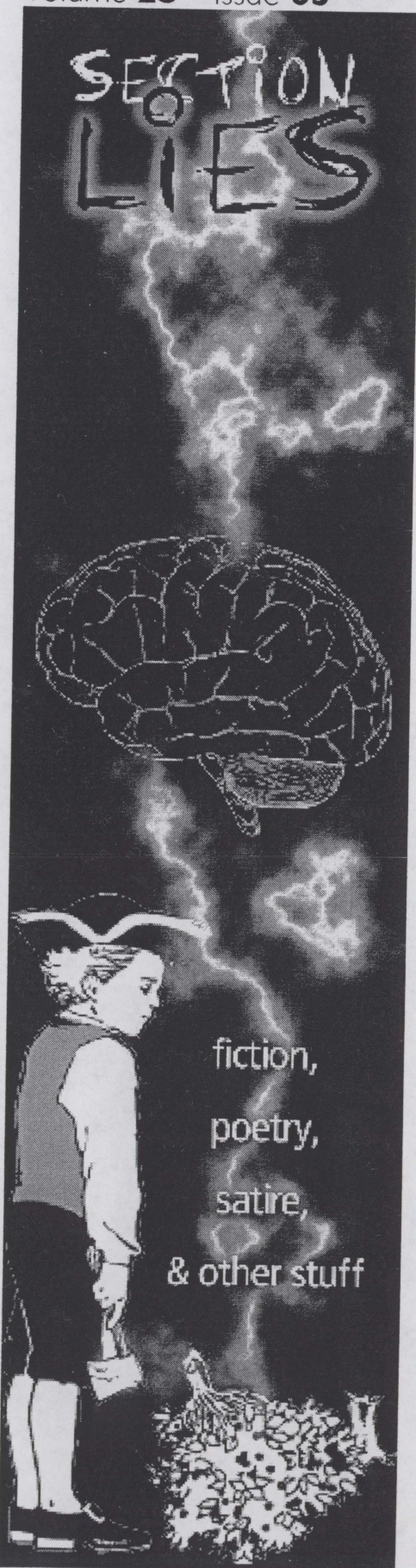


Picture Time!



Hey Hampshire, have you seen this person? No? Because, YOUR MOM HAS!

[by Kelsey Freeman]



The Last Days of Racism

No. No, shut up. No, quiet your mouth, I'll have none of *that* now. For serious though, I'm *not* a racist. I see *all* races as equal despite their obvious shortcomings, not like those dirty, dirty men that live in the South. Boo! Booooo you Southern men. They don't understand you my brother. Oh, my bad, I mean: *daieg*. Yup, it's pretty wonderful being a white liberal, free from the oppressive thoughts that chain my southern, republican countrymen. I *get* you, ya know? Yeah... Mexicans? Look, I completely understand that you need periodic naps. It's in your blood! Blacks African Americans? I can't start a day without my morning cup of coffee, so can I totally sympathize with your cravings for watermelon and fried chicken! Asians? From the bottom of my heart here, I cannot help but stand in completely in *awe* every time I see you doing your "mathematics". I wish God had blessed *me* with a robot brain! Am I right? Am I right??? HA! YEAH! Oh yeah, you can put those packages right there off to the side.

Anyway, as I was saying, I am not a racist. I mean serious- check this out: Whenever I go get ice cream at the ice cream shoppe I just tell the man - or woman - there, I say, "Hey, just surprise me!" I *could* get vanilla, but I could just as well get blueberry too, or raspberry. Or maybe even chocolate. Sometimes I get vanilla mixed with chocolate and I don't even *care*! You know why that is? Because I don't believe in segregation and I'm not a racist! Hooray for the empowered man! I eat that ice cream as though it were just one flavor. Scratch that, because I'm not pretending. That ice cream actually is one flavor. You

could tell me it's two and I wouldn't know! I'd be all, "WHAT? You're a racist!" HA!!! HAAA!!! Right? Yeah. Would you like to meet my daughters? You should come over for dinner sometime, I'm sure the family would love to have someone like you over for dinner. I just feel so bad about how that whole enslavement thing- I feel like I should help to make it up to your people! I mean, right?

Ok, wait, I think I got it. We can talk about this over the dinner of course, but I'm sure you'll like this idea. IT'S SO AMAZING! Ok, so you and I- we should team up. Speechless huh? I know, brilliant! We'll travel across the land, mainly to places like the South, spreading our message of equality and friendship. We'll go up on stages and shake hands and smile. We'll hit all the circuits and over turn racism. Right in its tracks... Maybe we'll be in the middle of things- I can see it now- and suddenly we'll dash of stage. I'll flip over a bench and expose some racism that was hiding underneath it, "GAH! *raCisM* and then *you* can shoot it. *Bang, bang!* Oh, Christ, we're such good **teammates**! By the way, do you mind if I call you Friday? Oh. ah. aha! ok. You have more packages to drop off. Ok, well I understand how hard it is to make ends meet, so I'll let you to it- uh, here! Let me give you my address though, you just hold onto that for safe keeping and stop by *anytime*.

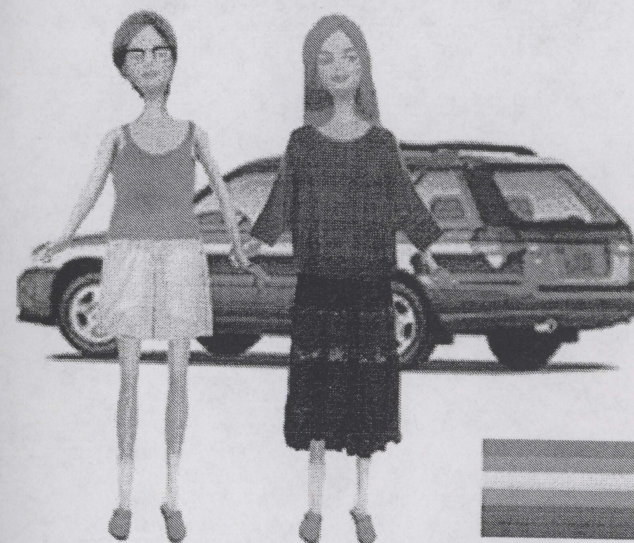
[*The parcel delivery man leaves.*]

God damn! This *cocAINE* is so fucking GOOD!!!



[by Chris Semple]

Mattel recently announced the release of limited-edition Barbie Dolls for the Massachusetts market:



AMHERST/ NORTHAMPTON Barbie This doll is made of actual tofu. She has long straight brown hair, arch-less feet, hairy armpits, no makeup and Birkenstocks with white socks. She prefers that you call her Willow. She does not want or need a Ken doll, but if you purchase two Barbies and the optional Subaru wagon, you get a rainbow flag bumper sticker for free.



NEW BEDFORD Barbie This Barbie now comes with a stroller and infant doll. Optional accessories include a GED and bus pass. Gangsta Ken and his 1979 Caddy were available, but are now very difficult to find since the addition of the infant.



NEWBURY STREET/ BACK BAY Barbie This princess Barbie is sold only at The Prudential Mall. She comes with an assortment of Kate Spade Handbags, a Lexus SUV, a long-haired foreign dog named Honey and a cookie-cutter house. Available with or without tummy tuck and face lift. Workaholic Ken sold only in conjunction with the augmented version.



MARBLEHEAD Barbie This yuppie Barbie comes with your choice of BMW convertible or Hummer H2. Included are her own Starbucks cup, credit card and country club membership. Also available for this set are Shallow Ken and Private School Skipper. You won't be able to afford any of them.

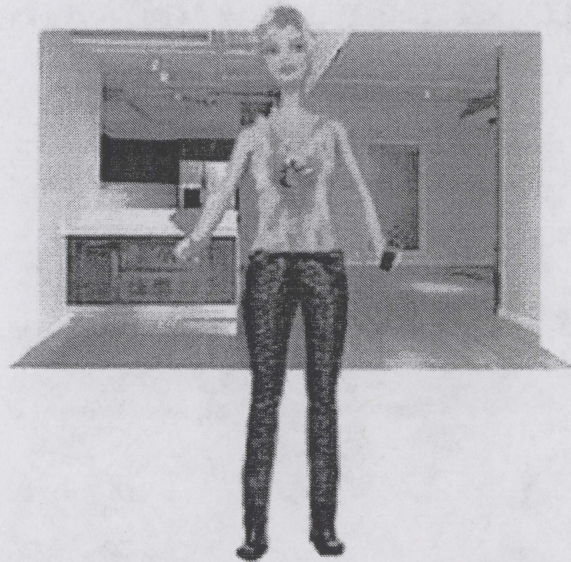
[Submitted by Sam Hoffman, from Michael Hoffman]



NORTH ADAMS Barbie This pale model comes dressed in her own Wrangler jeans two sizes too small, a NASCAR t-shirt and tweety bird tattoo on her shoulder. She has a six-pack of Bud light and a Hank Williams Jr. CD set. She can spit over 5 feet and kick mullet-haired Ken's butt when she is drunk. Purchase her pickup truck separately and get a confederate flag bumper sticker absolutely free.



WESTERN MA Barbie This tobacco-chewing, brassy-haired Barbie has a pair of her own high-heeled sandals with one broken heel from the time she chased beer-gutted Ken out her house. Her ensemble includes low-rise acid-washed jeans, fake fingernails, and a see-through halter-top. Also available with a mobile home.



DOWNTOWN BOSTON/ NORTH END Barbie This collagen injected, rhino plastic Barbie wears a leopard print outfit and drinks cosmopolitans while entertaining friends. Percocet prescription available as well as warehouse conversion condo.

FRAMINGHAM Barbie The modern day homemaker Barbie is available with Ford Wind star Minivan and matching gym outfit. She gets lost easily and has no full-time occupation. Traffic jamming cell phone sold separately.

SOUTH SHORE Barbie She's perfect in every way. We don't know where Ken is because he's always out a-'huntin'.

PROVINCETOWN Barbie/Ken This versatile doll can be easily converted from Barbie to Ken by simply adding or subtracting the multiple snap-on parts.

WORCESTER Barbie (ALSO SOLD IN SPRINGFIELD) This recently paroled Barbie comes with a 9mm handgun, a Ray Lewis knife, a Chevy with dark tinted windows, and a Meth Lab Kit. This model is only available after dark and must be paid for in cash (preferably small, untraceable bills) ..unless you are a cop, then we don't know what you are talking about.

I COULD NEVER GET THE HANG OF THURSDAYS

[A fortnightly column by Douglas Adams*]

Greetings, good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Another two weeks has gone by and once again I find the time has come for me to sit down and write column. I hope that my writing inspires you all, especially those of you who are currently missing some sort of deadline. Know that I support you in your procrastination efforts.

I find myself this week in a state of depression: it's been two weeks, and once again I'm at a complete dead end in the "subjects to write about" department. I've taken walks, I've read articles, and I've eaten several sandwiches, and still, I'm unable to come up with even one topic on which it would be possible to base an entire column. So I think I'm going to start taking suggestions. Of course, when I say 'taking suggestions', I do, in fact, mean 'hearing suggestions'. While it would be entertaining for me to attempt to write an entire column of the satisfaction one might get out of a particularly gratifying bowel movement, it is unlikely that this is the sort of topic that would be popular to the average reader. Or perhaps I am incorrect. Either way, please, find some way to let me know.

In the meantime I'm forty five minutes over my deadline and I've still got half a page to fill with meaningful

drivel. So here's a short list of column ideas I have come up with and rejected over the past few weeks. Perhaps they'll inspire you to come up with and reject your own column ideas, and we can have a bit of camaraderie on the subject.

This week I chose not to write:

a.) A column describing a brilliant idea I had, wherein a music company would put out an album full of the very worst popular songs of the past five years, and call it "Songs For Dogs To Take A Shit To".

b.) A column about the discovery of a very distant but very devoted fanbase I've acquired out in Albuquerque, New Mexico, thus proving that whatever drivel you chose to write, there is almost always someone out there reading it and enjoying it.

c.) A column based on the list I was making awhile back, that contains the names of every acquaintance I've ever had and the percentage of whose names start with the letter 'A'.

d.) A column discussing anything that anybody might actually care about: current political and world events, current sporting events, current

hairstyles of the rich and famous, or some sort of short paragraph containing all of the above.

e.) A column saying nothing at all, and instead just including an amusing pictures of some sort, shamelessly taken from the internet, with the caption "If a picture is worth a thousand words, I've met my deadline for this week."

And so on and so forth. Clearly, I'm better off having not written any of these things at all (at least, that's my opinion). I feel as if I'm giving you a bit of a cop-out once again, and for that I apologise. Perhaps this is that 'writer's block' thing I've always feared. In any event, accept my sincerest apologies. Hopefully within the next few weeks a stroke of brilliance will happen my way, and I shall once again be able to grace this lovely publication with words of wit and wisdom.

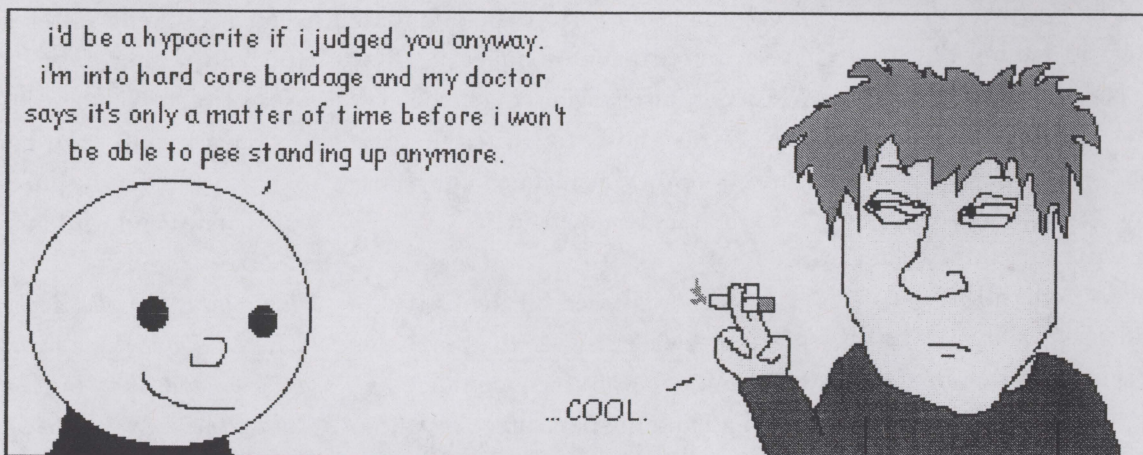
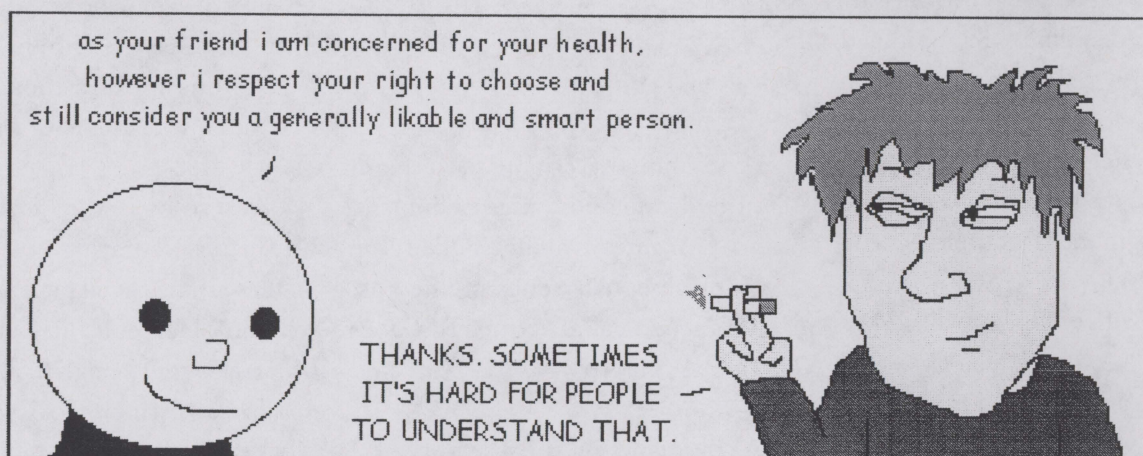
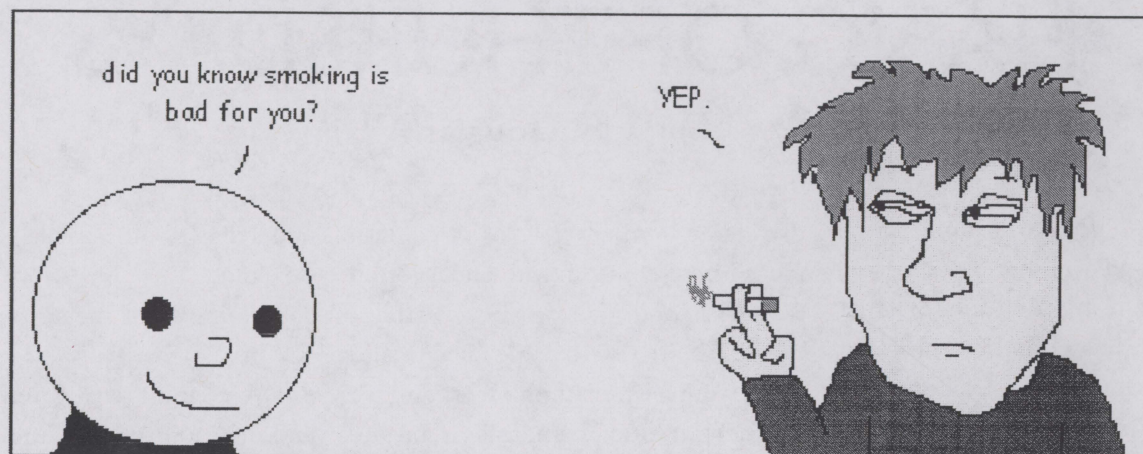
**The spirit of Douglas Adams is channeled by Rachel Rakov. Any ideas for a column should be directed to post box 1335, and proper acknowledgements will be arranged.*

[by Rachel Rakov]



BLACK SHEEP & FROG's

...PSA



BY ANDREW FLANAGAN